Trooper

In La Tazza, a coffee shop in Manayunk,
a stairway led you stiffly into a high-ceiling'd,
Spartan, red-painted basement, where I
wound up with Chris one autumn night
in '97. How Jeremy's group picked us up
I don't know, but we all wound up in an
apartment on Main Street. Everyone was
wearing army jackets; Jeremy was uncharacteristically
quiet. He had already lost control of his
cabal, & blew in the wind. The poems lay,
then, wrapped in a dossier-style presentation,
at Villanova, among other secret files; as they
lay, also, in Jeremy's brain, as tokens that
he once cared to be a real army-trooper.

Jeremy walks down Main Street. In his hands
is a copy of "d" magazine, which he
hopes to consign anywhere. Rather, he
hopes to dump in the river, a few blocks
down. The fame he wants is fast, or nothing.
He always thought he would make it someday.
If he doesn't, it's not his fault. Perhaps he
should move to New York, after all. Or
teach, tutor, bartend, give up the architecture
routine. His brain is a jumble of low & high.
It's worth something to him, to be big. Why
starve? Why play pauper? It's true: unless he feels
royal, royally protected, he can't write.
Main Street dead-ends: it's ruthlessly midnight.

—Adam Fieled